LITTLE BLUE BOOK NO. 4
Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius

The Age of Reason

Thomas Paine

LITTLE BLUE BOOK NO. 4
Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius

The Age of Reason

Thomas Paine

HALDEMAN-JULIUS PUBLICATIONS
GIRARD, KANSAS

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

THE AGE OF REASON

I believe in the equality of man; and I believe that religious duties consist in doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavoring to make our fellow creatures happy.

But, lest it should be supposed that I believe many other things in addition to these, I shall, in the progress of this work, declare the things I do not believe, and my reasons for not believing them.

I do not believe in the creed professed by the Jewish church, by the Roman church, by the Greek church, by the Turkish church, by the Protestant church, nor by any church that I know of. My own mind is my own church.

All national institutions of churches, whether Jewish, Christian, or Turkish, appear to me no other than human inventions, set up to terrify and enslave mankind, and monopolize power and profit.

I do not mean by this declaration to condemn those who believe otherwise; they have the same right to their belief as I have to mine. But it is necessary to the happiness of man, that he be mentally faithful to himself. Infidelity does not consist in believing, or in disbelieving; it consists in professing to believe what he does not believe.

It is impossible to calculate the moral mischief, if I may so express it, that mental lying

has produced in society. When a man has so far corrupted and prostituted the chastity of his mind, as to subscribe his professional belief to things he does not believe, he has prepared himself for the commission of every other crime. He takes up the trade of a priest for the sake of gain, and, in order to qualify himself for that trade, he begins with a perjury. Can we conceive anything more destructive to morality than this?

The adulterous connection of church and state, wherever it had taken place, whether Jewish, Christian or Turkish, had so effectually prohibited, by pains and penalties, every discussion upon established creeds, and upon first principles of religion, that until the system of government should be changed, those subjects could not be brought fairly and openly before the world; but that whenever this should be done, a revolution in the system of religion would follow. Human inventions and priestcraft would be detected; and man would return to the pure, unmixed and unadulterated belief of one God, and no more.

Every national church or religion has established itself by pretending some special mission from God, communicated to certain individuals. The Jews have their Moses; the Christians their Jesus Christ, their apostles and saints; and the Turks their Mahomet, as if the way to God was not open to every man alike.

Each of those churches show certain books, which they call *revelation*, or the word of God. The Jews say that their word of God was given

by God to Moses, face to face; the Christians say, that their word of God came by divine inspiration; and the Turks say, that their word of God (the Koran) was brought by an angel from Heaven. Each of those churches accuse the other of unbelief; and, for my own part, I disbelieve them all.

* * * * * * *

It has often been said, that anything may be proved from the Bible, but before anything can be admitted as proved by the Bible, the Bible itself must be proved to be true; for if the Bible be not true, or the truth of it be doubtful, it ceases to have authority, and cannot be admitted as proof of anything.

It has been the practice of all Christian commentators on the Bible, and of all Christian priests and preachers, to impose the Bible on the world as a mass of truth, and as the word of God; they have disputed and wrangled and anathematized each other about the supposable meaning of particular parts and passages therein; one has said and insisted that such a passage meant such a thing; another that it meant directly the contrary; and a third, that it means neither one nor the other, but something different from both; and this they call *understanding* the Bible.

Now instead of wasting their time, and heating themselves in fractious disputations about doctrinal points drawn from the Bible, these men ought to know, and if they do not, it is civility to inform them, that the first thing to be understood is, whether there is sufficient

authority for believing the Bible to be the word of God, or whether there is not.

There are matters in that book, said to be done by the *express command* of God, that are as shocking to humanity, and to every idea we have of moral justice, as anything done by Robespierre, by Carrier, by Joseph le Bon, in France, by the English government in the East Indies, or by any other assassin in modern times. When we read in the books ascribed to Moses, Joshua, etc., that they (the Israelites) came by stealth upon whole nations of people, who, as the history itself shows, had given them no offense; *that they put all those nations to the sword; that they spared neither age nor infancy; that they utterly destroyed men, women and children; that they left not a soul to breathe;* expressions that are repeated over and over again in those books, and that too with exulting ferocity; are we sure these things are facts? Are we sure that the Creator of man commissioned these things to be done? Are we sure that the books that tell us so were written by his authority?

It is not the antiquity of a tale that is any evidence of its truth; on the contrary, it is a symptom of its being fabulous; for the more ancient any history pretends to be, the more it has the resemblance of a fable. The origin of every nation is buried in fabulous tradition, and that of the Jews is as much to be suspected as any other. To charge the commission of acts upon the Almighty, which in their own nature and by every rule of moral justice, are crimes as all assassination is, and more es-

pecially the assassination of infants, is matter of serious concern. The Bible tells us that those assassinations were done by the *express command of God.* To believe, therefore, the Bible to be true, we must *unbelieve* all our belief in the moral justice of God; for wherein could crying or smiling infants offend? And to read the Bible without horror, we must undo everything that is tender, sympathizing, and benevolent in the heart of man. Speaking for myself, if I had no other evidence that the Bible was fabulous, than the sacrifice I must make to believe it to be true, that alone would be sufficient to determine my choice.

But in addition to all the moral evidence against the Bible, I will in the progress of this work produce such other evidence, as even a priest cannot deny; and show, from that evidence, that the Bible is not entitled to credit, as being the word of God.

I begin with what are called the five books of Moses, *Genesis*, *Exodus*, *Leviticus*, *Numbers* and *Deuteronomy.* My intention is to show that those books are spurious, and that Moses is not the author of them; and still further, that they were not written in the time of Moses, nor till several hundred years afterwards; that they are no other than an attempted history of the life of Moses, and of the times in which he is said to have lived, and also of the times prior thereto, written by some very ignorant and stupid pretenders to authorship, several hundred years after the death of Moses, as men now write histories of things that happened, or are supposed to have

happened, several hundred or several thousand years ago.

The evidence that I should produce in this case is from the books themselves, and I will confine myself to this evidence only. Were I to refer for proof to any of the ancient authors whom the advocates of the Bible call profane authors, they would controvert that authority as I controvert theirs; I will, therefore, meet them on their own ground, and oppose them with their own weapon; the Bible.

In the first place, there is no affirmative evidence that Moses is the author of those books; and that he is the author is altogether an unfounded opinion, got abroad nobody knows how. The style and manner in which those books are written give no room to believe, or even to suppose, they were written by Moses; for it is altogether the style and manner of another person speaking of Moses.

But, granting the grammatical right that Moses might speak of himself in the third person, because any man might speak of himself in that manner, it cannot be admitted as a fact in those books that it is Moses who speaks without rendering Moses truly ridiculous and absurd. For example, Numbers, chap. xii, ver. 3: "*Now the man Moses was very meek, above all men which were on the face of the earth.*" If Moses said this of himself, instead of being the meekest of men he was one of the most vain and arrogant of coxcombs; and the advocates of those books may now take which side they please, for both sides are against them: if Moses was not the author, the

books are without authority; and if he was the author, the author was without credit, because to boast of *meekness* is the reverse of meekness, and is *a lie in sentiment.*

In Deuteronomy, the style and manner of writing marks more evidently than in the former books that Moses is not the writer. The manner here used is dramatical: the writer opens the subject by a short introductory discourse, and then introduces Moses in the act of speaking, and, when he has made Moses finish his harangue, he (the writer) resumes his own part, and speaks till he brings Moses forward again, and at last closes the scene with an account of the death, funeral and character of Moses.

Having thus shown, as far as grammatical evidence applies, that Moses was not the writer of those books, I will, after making a few observations on the inconsistencies of the writer of the book of Deuteronomy, proceed to show from the historical and chronological evidence contained in those books, that Moses, *was not*, because *he could not be*, the writer of them; and consequently, that there is no authority for believing, that the inhuman and horrid butcheries of men, women and children, told in those books, were done, as those books say they were, at the command of God. It is a duty incumbent on every true Deist, that he vindicate the moral justice of God against the calumnies of the Bible.

The writer of the book of Deuteronomy, whoever he was (for it is an anonymous work),

is obscure, and also in contradiction with himself, in the account he has given of Moses.

After telling that Moses went to the top of Pisgah (and it does not appear from any account that he ever came down again) he tells us, that Moses died *there* in the land of Moab, and that *he* buried him in a valley in the land of Moab; but as there is no antecedent to the pronoun *he*, there is no knowing who *he* was that did bury him. If the writer meant that *he* (God) buried him, how should *he* (the writer) know it? or why should we (the readers) believe him? since we know not who the writer was that tells us so, for certainly Moses could not himself tell where he was buried.

The writer also tells us, that no man knoweth where the sepulcher of Moses is *unto this day*, meaning the time in which this writer lived; how then should he know that Moses was buried in a valley in the land of Moab? for as the writer lived long after the time of Moses, as is evident from his using the expression of *unto this day*, meaning a great length of time after the death of Moses, he certainly was not at his funeral; and on the other hand, it is impossible that Moses himself could say, that *no man knoweth where the sepulcher is unto this day*. To make Moses the speaker would be an improvement on the play of a child that hides himself and cries, *Nobody can find me;* nobody can find Moses.

This writer has nowhere told us how he came by the speeches which he has put into the mouth of Moses to speak, and, therefore, we have a right to conclude, that he either

composed them himself, or wrote them from oral tradition. One or the other of these is the more probable, since he has given, in the fifth chapter, a table of commandments, in which that called the fourth commandment is different from the fourth commandment in the twentieth chapter of Exodus. In that of Exodus, the reason given for keeping the seventh day is "because (says the commandment) God made the heavens and earth in six days, and rested on the seventh"; but in that of Deuteronomy, the reason given is that it was the day on which the children of Israel came out of Egypt, and *therefore*, says this commandment, *the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day.* This makes no mention of the creation, nor that of the coming out of Egypt. There are also many things given as laws of Moses in this book, that are not to be found in any of the other books; among which is that inhuman and brutal law, chap. xxi. ver. 18, 19, 20, 21, which authorizes parents, the father and the mother, to bring their own children to have them stoned to death for what it is pleased to call stubbornness. But priests have always been fond of preaching up Deuteronomy, for Deuteronomy preaches up tithes; and it is from this book, chap. xxv, ver. 4, they have taken the phrase, and applied it to tithing, that *thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn;* and that this might not escape observation, they have noted it in the table of contents at the head of the chapter, though it is only a single verse of less than two lines. O! priests! priests!

ye are willing to be compared to an ox, for the sake of tithes. Though it is impossible for us to know *identically* who the writer of Deuteronomy was, it is not difficult to discover him *professionally*, that he was some Jewish priest, who lived, as I shall show in the course of this work, at least three hundred and fifty years after the time of Moses.

I come now to speak of the historical and chronological evidence. The chronology that I shall use is the Bible chronology; for I mean not to go out of the Bible for evidence of anything, but to make the Bible itself prove historically and chronologically, that Moses is not the author of the books ascribed to him. It is, therefore, proper that I inform the reader (such an one at least as may not have the opportunity of knowing it), that in the larger Bibles, and also in some smaller ones, there is a series of chronology printed in the margin of every page, for the purpose of showing how long the historical matters stated in each page happened, or are supposed to have happened, before Christ, and, consequently, the distance of time between one historical circumstance and another.

I begin with the book of Genesis. In the 14th chapter of Genesis, the writer gives an account of Lot being taken prisoner in a battle between the four kings against five, and carried off, and that when the account of Lot being taken came to Abraham, he armed all his household and marched to rescue Lot from the captors; and that he pursued them unto Dan (ver. 14).

To show in what manner this expression of *pursuing them unto Dan* applies to the case in question, I will refer to two circumstances, the one in America, the other in France. The city now called New York, in America, was originally New Amsterdam; and the town in France, lately called Havre Marat, was before called Havre de Grace. New Amsterdam was changed to New York in the year 1664; Havre de Grace to Havre Marat in 1793. Should, therefore, any writing be found, though without date, in which the name of New York should be mentioned, it would be certain evidence that such a writing could not have been written before, and must have been written after New Amsterdam was changed to New York, and consequently not till after the year 1664, or at least during the course of that year. And, in like manner, any dateless writing with the name of Havre Marat, would be certain evidence that such a writing must have been written after Havre de Grace became Havre Marat, and consequently not till after the year 1793, or at least during the course of that year.

I now come to the application of those cases, and to show that there was no such place as *Dan*, till many years after the death of Moses; and, consequently, that Moses could not be the writer of the book of Genesis, where this account of pursuing them unto *Dan* is given.

The place that is called Dan in the Bible was originally a town of the Gentiles, called Laish; and when the tribe of Dan seized upon this town, they changed its name to Dan, in commemoration of Dan, who was the father of that tribe, and the great grandson of Abraham.

To establish this in proof, it is necessary to refer from Genesis to the 18th chapter of the book called the Book of Judges. It is there said (ver. 27) *that they* (the Danites) *came unto Laish to a people that were quiet and secure, and they smote them with the edge of the sword* (the Bible is filled with murder) *and burned the city with fire; and they built a city* (ver. 28), *and dwelt therein, and they called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan, their father, howbeit the name of the city was Laish at the first.*

This account of the Danites taking possession of Laish and changing it to Dan is placed in the Book of Judges immediately after the death of Samson. The death of Samson is said to have happened 1120 years before Christ, and that of Moses 1451 before Christ, and, therefore, according to the historical arrangement, the place was not called Dan till 331 years after the death of Moses.

There is a striking confusion between the historical and the chronological arrangement in the Book of Judges. The five last chapters, as they stand in the book, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, are put chronologically before all the preceding chapters; they are made to be 28 years before the 16th chapter, 266 before the 15th, 245 before the 13th, 195 before the 9th, 90 before the 4th, and 15 years before the first chapter. This shows the uncertain and fabulous state of the Bible. According to the chronological arrangement, the taking of Laish and giving it the name of Dan is made to be 20 years after the death of Joshua, who was the successor of

Moses; and by the historical order as it stands in the book, it is made to be 306 years after the death of Joshua, and 331 after that of Moses; but they both exclude Moses from being the writer of Genesis because, according to either of the statements, no such place as Dan existed in the time of Moses; and therefore the writer of Genesis must have been some person who lived after the town of Laish had the name of Dan; who that person was nobody knows; and consequently the Book of Genesis is anonymous and without authority.

Take away from Genesis the belief that Moses was the author, on which only the strange belief that it is the word of God has stood, and there remains nothing of Genesis but an anonymous book of stories, fables, and traditionary or invented absurdities, or of downright lies. The story of Eve and the serpent, and of Noah and his ark, drops to a level with the Arabian Tales, without the merit of being entertaining; and the account of men living to eight or nine hundred years becomes as fabulous as the immortality of the giants of the Mythology.

Besides the character of Moses, as stated in the Bible, is the most horrid that can be imagined. If those accounts be true, he was the wretch that first began and carried on wars on the score, or on the pretense, of religion, and under that mask, or that infatuation, committed the most unexampled atrocities that are to be found in the history of any nation, of which I will state only one instance.

When the Jewish army returned from one

of their murdering and plundering excursions, the account goes on as follows, Numbers, chap. xxxi, ver. 13:

"And Moses, and Eleazer the priest, and all the princes of the congregation, went forth to meet them without the camp; and Moses was wroth with the officers of the host, with the captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, which came from the battle; and Moses said unto them, '*Have ye saved all the women alive?* behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the council of Balaam, to commit trespass against the Lord, in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord. Now, therefore, *kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known a man by lying with him; but all the women-children that have not known a man by lying with him keep alive for yourselves.*'"

Among the detestable villains that in any period of the world have disgraced the name of man, it is impossible to find a greater than Moses, if this account be true. Here is an order to butcher the boys, to massacre the mothers, and debauch the daughters.

After this detestable order follows an account of the plunder taken, and the manner of dividing it; and here it is that the profaneness of priestly hypocrisy increases the catalogue of crimes. Verse 37, "*And the Lord's tribute* of the sheep was six hundred and three score and fifteen; and the beeves was thirty and six thousand, of which the *Lord's tribute* was three score and twelve; and the asses were

thirty thousand, of which the Lord's tribute was three score and one; and the persons were thirty thousand, of which the Lord's tribute was thirty and two." In short, the matters contained in this chapter, as well as in many other parts of the Bible, are too horrid for humanity to read, or for decency to hear; for it appears, from the 35th verse of this chapter, that the number of women-children consigned to debauchery by the order of Moses was thirty-two thousand.

People in general know not what wickedness there is in this pretended word of God. Brought up in habits of superstition, they take it for granted that the Bible is true, and that it is good, they permit themselves not to doubt of it, and they carry the ideas they form of the benevolence of the Almighty to the book which they have been taught to believe was written by his authority. Good heavens! it is quite another thing; it is a book of lies, wickedness, and blasphemy, for what can be greater blasphemy than to ascribe the wickedness of man to the orders of the Almighty!

But to return to my subject, that of showing that Moses is not the author of the books ascribed to him, and that the Bible is spurious. The two instances I have already given would be sufficient, without any additional evidence, to invalidate the authenticity of any book that pretended to be four or five hundred years more ancient than the matters it speaks of, or refers to, as facts; for in the case of *pursuing them unto Dan*, and of *the kings that reigned over the children of Israel*, not even the flimsy

pretense of prophesy can be pleaded. The expressions are in the preter tense, and it would be downright idiotism to say that a man could prophesy in the preter tense.

Joshua, according to the first chapter of Joshua, was the immediate successor of Moses; he was, moreover, a military man, which Moses was not, and he continued as chief of the people of Israel 25 years; that is, from the time Moses died, which, according to the Bible chronology, was 1451 years before Christ, until 1426 years before Christ, when according to the same chronology, Joshua died. If, therefore, we find in this book, said to have been written by Joshua, reference to *facts done* after the death of Joshua, it is evidence that Joshua could not be the author; and also that the book could not have been written till after the time of the latest fact which it records. As to the character of the book, it is horrid; it is a military history of rapine and murder, as savage and brutal as those recorded of his predecessor in villainy and hypocrisy, Moses; and the blasphemy consists, as in the former books, in ascribing those deeds to the order of the Almighty.

In the first place, the book of Joshua, as is the case in the preceding books, is written in the third person; it is the historian of Joshua that speaks, for it would have been absurd and vain-glorious that Joshua should say of himself, as is said of him in the last verse of the sixth chapter, that "*his fame was noised throughout all the country.*" I now come more immediately to the proof.

In the 24th chapter, ver. 31, it is said, "that Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and *all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua.*" Now, in the name of common sense, can it be Joshua that relates what people had done after he was dead? This account must not only have been written by some historian that lived after Joshua, but that lived also after the elders that outlived Joshua.

There are several passages of a general meaning with respect to time, scattered throughout the book of Joshua, that carries the time in which the book was written to a distance from the time of Joshua, but without marking by exclusion any particular time, as in the passage above quoted. In that passage, the time that intervened between the death of Joshua and the death of the elders, is excluded descriptively and absolutely, and the evidence substantiates that the book could not have been written till after the death of the last.

But though the passages to which I allude, and which I am going to quote, do not designate any particular time by exclusion, they imply a time far more distant from the days of Joshua than is contained between the death of Joshua and the death of the elders. Such is the passage, chap. x, ver. 14; where, after giving an account that the sun stood still upon Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon, at the command of Joshua (a tale only fit to amuse children), the passage says, "And there was no day like that, before it, nor after it, that the Lord hearkened to the voice of a man."

This tale of the sun standing still upon Mount Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon, is one of those fables that detects itself. Such a circumstance could not have happened without being known all over the world. One-half would have wondered why the sun did not rise, and the other why it did not set; and the tradition of it would have been universal, whereas there is not a nation in the world that knows anything about it. But why must the moon stand still? What occásion could there be for moonlight in the daytime, and that too while the sun shined? As a poetical figure, the whole is well enough; it is akin to that in the song of Deborah and Barak; *The stars in their courses fought against Sisera;* but it is inferior to the figurative declaration of Mahomet to the persons who came to expostulate with him on his going on. *Wert thou*, said he, *to come to me with the sun in thy right hand and the moon in thy left, it should not alter my career.* For Joshua to have exceeded Mahomet, he should have put the sun and moon, one in each pocket, and carried them as Guy Faux carried his dark lantern, and taken them out to shine as he might happen to want them.

In enumerating the several exploits of Joshua, and of the tribes, and of the places which they conquered or attempted it is said, chap. xv. ver. 63, "As for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out; but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah *at Jerusalem unto this day.*" The question upon this passage is, at what time did the Jebu-

sites and the children of Judah dwell together at Jerusalem? As this matter occurs again in the first chapter of Judges, I shall reserve my observations till I come to that part.

Having thus shown from the book of Joshua itself, without any auxiliary evidence whatever, that Joshua is not the author of that book, and that it is anonymous, and consequently without authority, I proceed, as before mentioned, to the book of Judges.

The book of Judges is anonymous on the face of it; and, therefore, even the pretense is wanting to call it the word of God; it has not so much as a nominal voucher; it is altogether fatherless.

In the first chapter of Judges, the writer, after announcing the death of Joshua, proceeds to tell what happened between the children of Judah and the native inhabitants of the land of Canaan. In this statement, the writer, having abruptly mentioned Jerusalem in the 7th verse, says immediately after, in the 8th verse, by way of explanation, "Now that the children of Judah *had* fought against Jerusalem, and *taken it*," consequently this book could not have been written before Jerusalem had been taken. The reader will recollect the quotation I have just before made from the 15th chapter of Joshua, ver. 63, where it said that *the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem unto this day*, meaning the time when the book of Joshua was written.

The evidence I have already produced, to prove that the books I have hitherto treated of were not written by the persons to whom

they are ascribed, nor till many years after their death, if such persons ever lived, is already so abundant, that I can afford to admit this passage with less weight than I am entitled to draw from it. For the case is that so far as the Bible can be credited as an history, the city of Jerusalem was not taken till the time of David; and, consequently, the book of Joshua, and of Judges, were not written till after the commencement of the reign of David, which was 370 years after the death of Joshua.

The name of the city, that was afterwards called Jerusalem, was originally called Jebus, or Jebusi, and was the capital of the Jebusites. The account of David's taking this city is given in 2 Samuel, chap. v., ver. 4, &c.; also in 1 Chron., chap. xiv., ver. 4, &c. There is no mention in any part of the Bible that it was ever taken before, nor any account that favors such an opinion. It is said, either in Samuel or in Chronicles, that they *utterly destroyed men, women and children; that they left not a soul to breathe*, as is said of their other conquests; and the silence here observed implies that it was taken by capitulation, and that the Jebusites, the native inhabitants, continued to live in the place after it was taken. The account, therefore, given in Joshua that *the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah* at Jerusalem unto this day, corresponds to no other time than after the taking of the city of David.

Having now shown that every book in the Bible, from Genesis to Judges, is without authenticity, I come to the book of Ruth, an idle, bungling story, foolishly told, nobody knows

by whom, about a strolling country girl creeping slyly to bed to her cousin Boaz. Pretty stuff indeed to be called the word of God! It is, however, one of the best books in the Bible, for it is free from murder and rapine.

I come next to the two books of Samuel, and to show that those books were not written by Samuel, nor till a great length of time after the death of Samuel; and that they are, like all the former books, anonymous and without authority.

To be convinced that these books have been written much later than the time of Samuel, and, consequently, not by him, it is only necessary to read the account which the writer gives of Saul going to seek his father's asses, and of his interview with Samuel, of whom Saul went to inquire about those lost asses, as foolish people now-a-days go to a conjurer to inquire after lost things.

The writer, in relating this story of Saul, Samuel and the asses, does not tell it as a thing that had just then happened, but as an ancient *story in the time the writer lived;* for he tells it in the language or terms used at the time that *Samuel* lived, which obliges the writer to explain the story in the terms or language used in the time the *writer lived.*

Samuel, in the account given of him, in the first of these books, chap. ix., is called *the seer;* and it is by this term that Saul inquires after him, ver. 11, "And as they (Saul and his servant) went up the hill to the city, they found young maidens going out to draw water; and they said unto them, *Is the seer here?*" Saul

then went according to the direction of these maidens, and met Samuel without knowing him, and said unto him, ver. 18, "Tell me, I pray thee, where the *seer's house is?* and Samuel answered Saul and said, *I am the seer.*"

As the writer of the book of Samuel relates these questions and answers, in the language or manner of speaking used in the time they are said to have been spoken; and as that manner of speaking was out of use when this author wrote, he found it necessary, in order to make the story understood, to explain the terms in which these questions and answers are spoken; and he does this in the 9th verse, where he says, "*before-time*, in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, thus he spake, Come, let us go to the seer; for he that is now called a prophet, was *before-time* called a seer." This proves, as I have before said, that this story of Saul, Samuel and the asses, was an ancient story at the time the book of Samuel was written, and consequently Samuel did not write it, and that that book was without authenticity.

But if we go further into those books the evidence is still more positive that Samuel is not the writer of them; for they relate things that did not happen till several years after the death of Samuel. Samuel died before Saul; for the 1st Samuel, chap. xxviii, tells that Saul, and the witch of Endor conjured Samuel up after he was dead; yet the history of the matters contained in those books is extended through the remaining part of Saul's life, and to the latter end of the life of David, who suc-

ceeded Saul. The account of the death and burial of Samuel (a thing which he could not write himself) is related in the 25th chapter of the first book of Samuel; and the chronology affixed to this chapter makes this to be 1060 years before Christ; yet the history of this *first* book is brought down to 1056 years before Christ; that is, till the death of Saul, which was not till four years after the death of Samuel.

The second book of Samuel begins with an account of things that did not happen till four years after Samuel was dead; for it begins with the reign of David, who succeeded Saul, and it goes on to the end of David's reign, which was forty-three years after the death of Samuel; and, therefore, the books are in themselves positive evidence that they were not written by Samuel.

I have now gone through all the books in the first part of the Bible, to which the names of persons are affixed, as being the authors of those books, and which the church, styling itself the Christian church, have imposed upon the world as the writings of Moses, Joshua and Samuel; and I have detected and proved the falsehood of this imposition. And now, ye priests, of every description, who have preached and written against the former part of the *Age of Reason*, what have ye to say? Will ye, with all this mass of evidence against you and staring you in the face, still have the assurance to march into your pulpits, and continue to impose these books on your congregation, as the work of *inspired penmen*, and the word of

God, when it is as evident as demonstration can make truth appear, that the persons who, ye say, are the authors, are *not* the authors, and that ye know not who the authors are? What shadow of pretense have ye now to produce for continuing the blasphemous fraud? What have ye still to offer against the pure and moral religion of Deism, in support of your system of falsehood, idolatry and pretended revelation? Had the cruel and murderous orders, with which the Bible is filled, and the numberless torturing executions of men, women and children, in consequence of those orders, been ascribed to some friend, whose memory you revered, you would have glowed with satisfaction at detecting the falsehood of the charge, and gloried in defending his injured fame. It is because ye are sunk in the cruelty of supersition, or feel no interest in the honor of your Creator, that ye listen to the horrid tales of the Bible, or hear them with callous indifference. The evidence I have produced, and shall still produce in the course of this work, to prove that the Bible is without authority, will, whilst it wounds the stubbornness of a priest, relieve and tranquilize the minds of millions; it will free them from all those hard thoughts of the Almighty which priestcraft and the Bible had infused into their minds, and which stood in everlasting opposition to all their ideas of his moral justice and benevolence.

I come now to the two books of Kings, and the two books of Chronicles. Those books are altogether historical, and are chiefly confined

to the lives and actions of the Jewish kings, who in general were a parcel of rascals; but these are matters with which we have no more concern, than we have with the Roman emperors, or Homer's account of the Trojan war. Besides which, as those works are anonymous, and as we know nothing of the writer or of his character, it is impossible for us to know what degree of credit to give to the matters related therein. Like all other ancient histories, they appear to be a jumble of fable and fact, and of probable and of improbable things; but which, distance of time and place, and change of circumstances in the world, have rendered obsolete and uninteresting.

The chief use I shall make of those books will be that of comparing them with each other, and with other parts of the Bible, to show the confusion, contradiction and cruelty in this pretended word of God.

The first book of Kings begins with the reign of Solomon, which, according to the Bible chronology, was 1015 years before Christ; and the second book ends 588 years before Christ, being a little after the reign of Zedekiah, whom Nebuchadnezzar, after taking Jerusalem and conquering the Jews, carried captive to Babylon. The two books include a space of 427 years.

The two books of Chronicles are a history of the same times, and, in general, of the same persons, by another author; for it would be absurd to suppose that the same author wrote the history twice over. The first book of Chronicles (after giving the genealogy from

Adam to Saul, which takes up the first nine chapters) begins with the reign of David; and the last book ends as in the last book of Kings, soon after the reign of Zedekiah, about 588 years before Christ. The two last verses of the last chapter bring the history 52 years more forward, that is, to 536. But these verses do not belong to the book, as I shall show when I come to speak of the book of Ezra.

The two books of Kings, besides the history of Saul, David and Solomon, who reigned over *all* Israel, contain an abstract of the lives of seventeen kings and one queen, who are styled Kings of Judah, and of nineteen, who are styled Kings of Israel; for the Jewish nation, immediately on the death of Solomon, split into two parties, who chose separate kings, and who carried on most rancorous wars against each other.

Those two books are little more than a history of assassinations, treachery and wars. The cruelties that the Jews had accustomed themselves to practice on the Canaanites, whose country they had savagely invaded under a pretended gift from God, they afterwards practiced as furiously on each other. Scarcely half their kings died a natural death, and, in some instances, whole families were destroyed to secure possession to the successor, who, after a few years, and sometimes only a few months, or less, shared the same fate. In the tenth chapter of the second book of Kings an account is given of two baskets full of children's heads, seventy in number, being exposed at the entrance of the city; they were the children of

Ahab, and were murdered by the orders of Jehu, whom Elisha, the pretended man of God, had anointed to be king over Israel, on purpose to commit this bloody deed, and assassinate his predecessor. And in the account of the reign of Manaham, one of the kings of Israel who had murdered Shallum, who had reigned but one month, it is said, Kings, chap. xv, ver. 16, that Manaham smote the city of Tiphsah, because they opened not the city to him, *and all the women that were therein that were with child they ripped up.*

Could we permit ourselves to suppose that the Almighty would distinguish any nation of people by the name of *His chosen people*, we must suppose that people to have been an example to all the rest of the world of the purest piety and humanity, and not such a nation of ruffians and cut-throats as the ancient Jews were; a people who, corrupted by and copying after such monsters and imposters as Moses and Aaron, Joshua, Samuel and David, had distinguished themselves above all others, on the face of the known earth, for barbarity and wickedness. If we will not stubbornly shut our eyes and steel our hearts, it is impossible not to see, in spite of all that long established superstition imposes upon the mind, that that flattering appellation of *His chosen people* is no other than a *lie* the priests and leaders of the Jews had invented, to cover the baseness of their own characters, and which Christian priests, sometimes as corrupt and often as cruel, have professed to believe.

The two books of Chronicles are a repetition

of the same crimes; but the history is broken in several places by the author leaving out the reign of some of their kings; and in this, as well as in that of Kings, there is such a frequent transition from kings of Judah to kings of Israel, and from kings of Israel to kings of Judah, that the narrative is obscure in the reading. In the same book the history sometimes contradicts itself; for example, in the second book of Kings, chap. i., ver. 8, we are told, but in rather ambiguous terms, that, after the death of Ahaziah, King of Israel, Jehoram, or Joram, (who was of the house of Ahab), reigned in his stead in the *second year* of Jehoram, or Joram, son of Jehoshaphat, King of Judah; and in chap. viii., ver. 16, of the same book, it is said, and in the *fifth year* of Joram, the son of Ahab, king of Israel, Jehoshaphat being then king of Judah, began to reign; that is, one chapter says Joram of Judah began to reign in the *second year* of Joram of Israel; and the other chapter says, that Joram of Israel began to reign in the *fifth year* of Joram of Judah.

Several of the most extraordinary matters related in one history, as having happened during the reign of such and such of their kings, are not to be found in the other, in relating the reign of the same king; for example, the two first rival kings, after the death of Solomon, were Rehoboam and Jeroboam; and in 1 Kings, chap. xii. and xiii., an account is given of Jeroboam making an offering of burnt incense, and that a man who is there called a man of God, cried out against the altar, chap. xiii, ver. 2:

"O altar, altar, thus saith the Lord: Behold, a child shall be born to the house of David, Josiah by name, and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places, and burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee." Verse 4: "And it came to pass, when king Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, which had cried against the altar in Bethel, that he put forth his hand from the altar, saying, *Lay hold on him.* And his hand, which he put out against him, *dried up so that he could not pull it again to him.*"

One would think that such an extraordinary case as this (which is spoken of as a judgment), happened to the chief of one of the parties, and that at the first moment of the separation of the Israelites into two nations, would, if it had been true, have been recorded in both histories. But though men, in latter times, have believed *all that the prophets have said unto them*, it does not appear these prophets or historians believed each other, they know each other too well.

A long account is also given in Kings about Elijah. It runs through several chapters, and concludes with telling, 2 Kings, chap. ii., ver. 11: "And it came to pass as they (Elijah and Elisha) still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared *a chariot of fire and horses of fire*, and parted them both asunder, and Elijah *went up by a whirlwind into heaven.*" Hum! this the author of Chronicles, miraculous as the story is, makes no mention of, though he mentions Elijah by name; neither does he say anything of the story related in the second

chapter of the same book of Kings, of a parcel of children calling Elisha *bald head, bald head;* and that this *man of God*, ver. 24, "turned back, and looked upon them, *and cursed them in the name of the Lord;* and there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tore forty and two children of them." He also passes over in silence the story told, 2 Kings, chap. xiii, that when they were burying a man in the sepulchre, where Elisha had been buried, it happened that the dead man, as they were letting him down, (ver. 21), "touched the bones of Elisha, and he (the dead man) *revived, and stood upon his feet.*" The story does not tell us whether they buried the man notwithstanding he revived and stood upon his feet, or drew him up again. Upon all these stories the writer of Chronicles is as silent as any writer of the present day, who did not choose to be accused of *lying*, or at least of romancing, would be about stories of the same kind.

In my observation on the Book of Genesis, I have quoted a passage from the 36th chapter, verse 31, which evidently refers to a time *after* that kings began to reign over the children of Israel; and I have shown that as this verse is verbatim the same as in Chronicles, chap. i, verse 43, where it stands consistently with the order of history, which in Genesis it does not, that the verse in Genesis, and a great part of the 36th chapter, have been taken from Chronicles; and that the book of Genesis, though it is placed first in the Bible and ascribed to Moses, has been manufactured by some un-

known person, after the Book of Chronicles was written, which was not until at least eight hundred and sixty years after the time of Moses.

The evidence I proceed by to substantiate this is regular, and has in it but two stages. First, as I have already stated, that the passage in Genesis refers itself for *time* to Chronicles; secondly, that the Book of Chronicles, to which this passage refers itself, was not *begun* to be written until at least eight hundred and sixty years after the time of Moses. To prove this, we have only to look into the thirteenth verse of the third chapter of the first Book of Chronicles, where the writer, in giving the genealogy of the descendants of David mentions Zedekiah; and it was in the time of Zedekiah, that Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem, 588 years before Christ, and consequently more than 860 years after Moses. Those who have superstitiously boasted of the authority of the antiquity of the Bible, and particularly of the books ascribed to Moses, have done it without examination, and without any authority than that of one credulous man telling it to another; for, so far as historical and chronological evidence applies, the very first book in the Bible is not so ancient as the book of Homer, by more than three hundred years, and is about the same age with Æsop's Fables.

I am not contending for the morality of Homer; on the contrary, I think it a book of false glory; tending to inspire immoral and mischievous notions of honor; and with respect to Æsop, though the moral is in general

just, the fable is often cruel; and the cruelty of the fables does more injury to the heart, especially in a child, than the moral does good to the judgment.

The only thing that has any appearance of certainty in the Book of Ezra, is the time in which it was written, which was immediately after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity, about 536 years before Christ. Ezra (who, according to the Jewish commentators, is the same person as is called Esdras in the Apocrypha) was one of the persons who returned, and who, it is also probable, wrote the account of that affair. Nehemiah, whose book follows next to Ezra, was another of the returned persons; and who, it is also probable, wrote the account of the same affair, in the book that bears his name. But those accounts are nothing to us, nor to any other persons, unless it be to the Jews, as a part of the history of their nation; and there is just as much of the word of God in those books as there is in any of the histories of France, or Rapin's history of England, or the history of any other country.

But even in matters of historical record, neither of those writers are to be depended upon. In the second chapter of Ezra, the writer gives a list of the tribes and families, and of the precise number of souls of each that returned from Babylon to Jerusalem; and this enrollment of the persons so returned appears to have been one of the principal objects for writing the book, but in this there is an

error that destroys the intention of the undertaking.

The writer begins his enrollment in the following manner, chap. ii, ver. 3: "The children of Parosh, two thousand one hundred seventy and four." Ver. 4: "The children of Shephatiah, three hundred seventy and two." And in this manner he proceeds through all the families ;and in the 64th verse he makes a total, and says, the whole congregation together was *forty and two thousand three hundred and three score.*

But, whoever will take the trouble of casting up the several particulars, will find that the total is but 29,818; so that the error is 12,542. What certainty, then, can there be in the Bible for anything?

Nehemiah, in like manner, gives a list of the returned families, and of the number of each family. He begins, as in Ezra, by saying, chap. vii., ver. 8: "The children of Parosh, two thousand three hundred and seventy-two"; and so on through all the families. The list differs in several of the particulars from that of Ezra. In the 66th verse, Nehemiah makes a total, and says, as Ezra had said: "The whole congregation together was forty and two thousand three hundred and three score." But the particulars of this list make a total of but 31,089, so that the error here is 11,271. These writers may do well enough for Bible-makers, but not for anything where truth and exactness is necessary. The next book in course is the book Esther. If Madam Esther thought it any honor to offer herself as a kept mistress to

Ahasuerus, or as a rival to Queen Vashti, who had refused to come to a drunken king, in the midst of a drunken company, to be made a show of, (for the account says they had been drinking seven days, and were merry,) let Esther and Mordecai look to that, it is no business of ours—at least, it is none of mine; besides which the story has a great deal the appearance of being fabulous, and is also anonymous. I pass on to the book of Job.

The book of Job differs in character from all the books we have hitherto passed over. Treachery and murder make no part of this book; it is the meditations of a mind strongly impressed with the vicissitudes of human life, and by turns sinking under and struggling against the pressure. It is a highly wrought composition, between willing submission and involuntary discontent, and shows man, as he sometimes is, more disposed to be resigned than he is capable of being. Patience has but a small share in the character of the person of whom the book treats, on the contrary, his grief is often impetuous, but he still endeavors to keep a guard upon it, and seems determined, in the midst of accumulating ills, to impose upon himself the hard duty of contentment.

I have spoken in a respectful manner of the book of Job in the former part of the *Age of Reason*, but without knowing, at that time, what I have learned since; which is that, from all the evidence that can be collected, the book of Job does not belong to the Bible.

I have seen the opinion of two Hebrew commentators, Abenezra and Spinoza, upon this

subject; they both say that the book of Job carries no internal evidence of being a Hebrew book; that the genius of the composition, and the drama of the piece, are not Hebrew; that it has been translated from another language into Hebrew, and that the author of the book was a Gentile; that the character represented under the name of Satan (which is the first and only time this name is mentioned in the Bible) does not correspond to any Hebrew idea; and that the two convocations which the Deity is supposed to have made of those whom the poem calls sons of God, and the familiarity which this supposed Satan is stated to have with the Deity, are in the same case.

It may also be observed that the book shows itself to be the production of a mind cultivated in science, which the Jews, so far from being famous for, were very ignorant of, the allusions to the objects of natural philosophy are frequent and strong, and are of a different cast to anything in the books known to be Hebrew. The astronomical names, Pleiades, Orion and Arcturus, are Greek and not Hebrew names, and it does not appear from anything that is to be found in the Bible, that the Jews knew anything of astronomy, or that they studied it; they had no translation of those names into their own language, but adopted the names as they found them in the poem.

That the Jews did translate the literary productions of the Gentile nations into the Hebrew language, and mix them with their own, is not a matter of doubt; the thirty-first chapter of Proverbs is an evidence of this; it

is there said, ver. 1, *The word of King Lemuel, the prophet which his mother taught him.* This verse stands as a preface to the proverbs that follow, and which are not the proverbs of Solomon, but of Lemuel; and this Lemuel was not one of the kings of Israel, nor of Judah, but of some other country, and consequently a Gentile. The Jews, however, have adopted his proverbs, and as they cannot give any account who the author of the book of Job was, or how they came by the book; and as it differs in writing from the Hebrew writings, and stands totally unconnected with every other book and chapter in the Bible, before it, and after it, it has all the circumstantial evidence of being originally a book of the Gentiles.

The Bible-makers, and those regulators of time, the chronologists, appear to have been at a loss where to place or how to dispose of the book of Job; for it contains no one historical circumstance, nor allusion to any, that might serve to determine its place in the Bible. But it would not have answered the purpose of these men to have informed the world of their ignorance; and, therefore, they have affixed it to the area of 1520 years before Christ, which is during the time the Israelites were in Egypt, and for which they have just as much authority and no more than I should have for saying it was a thousand years before that period. The probability, however, is, that it is older than any book in the Bible; and it is the only one that can be read without indignation and disgust.

We know nothing of what the ancient Gen-

tile world (as it is called) was before the time of the Jews, whose practice has been to calumniate and blacken the character of all other nations; and it is from the Jewish accounts that we have learned to call them heathens. But, as far as we know to the contrary, they were a just and moral people,[1] and not addicted, like the Jews, to cruelty and revenge, but of whose profession of faith we are unacquainted. It appears to have been their custom to personify both virtue and vice by statues and images, as is done now-a-days both by statuary and by painting; but it does not follow from this, that they worshiped them any more than we do. I pass on to the book of *Psalms*, of which it is not necessary to make much observation. Some of them are moral, and others are very revengeful; and the greater part relate to certain local circumstances of the Jewish nation at the time they were written, with which we have nothing to do. It is, however, an error or an imposition to call them the Psalms of David; they are a collection, as song books are now-a-days, from different song writers, who lived at different times. The 137th Psalm could not have been written till more than 400 years after the time of David, because it was written in commemoration of

---

[1] Editor's Note: Knowledge obtained by recent excavations has proven Paine correct in this surmise. Joseph McCabe has proven, in his *Morals in Ancient Babylon* (Little Blue Book No. 1076), *Religion and Morals in Ancient Egypt* (1077), and *Life and Morals in Greece and Rome* (1078), that the ancient Gentile world was indeed moral and just.

an event, the captivity of the Jews in Babylon, which did not happen till that distance of time. "*By the rivers of Babylon we sat down; we wept when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows, in the midst thereof; for there they had carried us away captive, required of us a song, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.*" As a man would say to an American, or to a Frenchman, or to an Englishman, Sing us one of your American songs, or of your French songs, or of your English songs. This remark with respect to the time this Psalm was written, is of no other use than to show (among others already mentioned) the general imposition the world has been under, with respect to the authors of the Bible. No regard has been paid to time, place and circumstance; and the names of persons have been affixed to the several books, which it was as impossible they should write, as that a man should walk in procession at his own funeral.

The book of Proverbs. These, like the Psalms, are a collection, and that from authors belonging to other nations than those of the Jewish nation, as I have shown in the observations upon the book of Job; besides which some of the proverbs ascribed to Solomon did not appear till two hundred and fifty years after the death of Solomon; for it is said in the 1st verse of the 25th chapter, "*These are also proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekian, king of Judah, copied out.*" It was two hundred and fifty years from the time of Solomon to the time of Hezekiah. When a man is fa-

mous and his name is abroad, he is made the putative father of things he never said or did: and this, most probably, has been the case with Solomon. It appears to have been the fashion at that day to make proverbs, as it is now to make jest-books, and father them upon those who never saw them.

The book of *Ecclesiastes*, or the *Preacher*, is also ascribed to Solomon, and that with much reason, if not with truth. It is written as the soltary reflections of a worn-out debauchee, such as Solomon was, who looking back on scenes he can no longer enjoy, cries out, *All is vanity!* A great deal of the metaphor of the sentiment is obscure, most probably by translation; but enough is left to show they were strongly pointed in the original. From what is transmitted to us of the character of Solomon, he was witty, ostentatious, dissolute, and at last melancholy. He lived fast, and died, tired of the world, at the age of fifty-eight years.

The books called the books of the Prophets, fill up all the remaining parts of the Bible; they are sixteen in number, beginning with Isaiah and ending with Malachi. Of these sixteen prophets, all of whom, except the three last, lived within the time the books of Kings and Chronicles were written; two only, Isaiah and Jeremiah, are mentioned in the history of those books. I shall begin with those two, reserving what I have to say on the general character of the men called prophets to another part of the work.

Whoever will take the trouble of reading the book ascribed to Isaiah, will find it one of the most wild and disorderly compositions ever put together; it has neither beginning, middle, nor end; and, except a short historical part, and a few sketches of history in two or three of the first chapters, is one continued, incoherent, bombastical rant, full of extravagant metaphor without application, and destitute of meaning; a school-boy would scarcely have been excusable for writing such stuff; it is (at least in translation) that kind of composition and false taste that is properly called prose run mad.

I have already shown, in the instance of the two last verses of Chronicles, and the three first in Ezra, that the compilers of the Bible mixed and confounded the writing of different authors with each other, which alone, were there no other cause, is sufficient to destroy the authenticity of any compilation, because it is more than presumptive evidence that the compilers are ignorant who the authors were. A very glaring instance of this occurs in the book ascribed to Isaiah. The latter part of the 44th chapter, and the beginning of the 45th, so far from having been written by Isaiah, could only have been written by some person who lived at least an hundred and fifty years after Isaiah was dead.

These chapters are a compliment to *Cyrus*, who permitted the Jews to return to Jerusalem from the Babylonian captivity, to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple, as is stated in Ezra.

The last verse of the 44th chapter, and the beginning of the 45th, are in the following words: "*That saith of Cyrus, he is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure; even saying to Jerusalem, thou shalt be built; and to the temple thy foundations shall be laid; thus saith the Lord to his anointed to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden to subdue nations before him, and I will loose the loins of king to open before him the two-leaved gates, and the gate shall not be shut; I will go before thee,*" etc.

What audacity of church and priestly ignorance it is to impose this book upon the world as the writing of Isaiah, when Isaiah, according to their own chronology, died soon after the death of Hezekiah, which was 698 years before Christ, and the decree of Cyrus, in favor of the Jews returning to Jerusalem was, according to the same chronology, 536 years before Christ; which was a distance of time between the two of 162 years. I do not suppose that the compilers of the Bible made these books, but rather that they picked up some loose anonymous essays, and put them together under the names of such authors as best suited their purpose. They have encouraged the imposition, which is next to inventing it; for it was imposible but they must have observed it.

When we see the studied craft of the scripture-makers, in making every part of this romantic book of school-boy's eloquence bend to the monstrous idea of a Son of God, begot-

ten by a ghost on the body of a virgin, there is no imposition we are not justified in suspecting them of. Every phase and circumstance are marked with the barbarous hand of superstitious torture, and forced into meanings it was impossible they could have. The head of every chapter, the top of every page, are blazoned with the names of Christ and the Church, that the unwary reader might suck in the error before he began to read.

Behold a virgin[2] *shall conceive, and bear a son.* Isaiah, chap vii. ver. 14, has been interpreted to mean the person called Jesus Christ, and his mother Mary, and has been echoed through Christendom for more than a thousand years; and such has been the rage of this opinion, that scarcely a spot in it but has been stained with blood and marked with desolation in consequence of it. Though it is not my intention to enter into controversy on subjects of this kind, but to confine myself to show that the Bible is spurious; and thus, by taking away the foundation, to overthrow at once the whole structure of superstition raised thereon; I will, however, stop a moment to expose the fallacious application of this passage.

Whether Isaiah was playing a trick with Ahaz, king of Judah, to whom this passage is spoken, is no business of mine; I mean only to show the misapplication of the passage, and

---

2 Editor's Note: Joseph McCabe has pointed out in his *Forgery of the Old Testament* (Little Blue Book No. 1066), p. 49, that the Hebrew text was wrongly translated. He says, "the Hebrew word is not 'virgin' but 'girl,' and conception by a girl was not miraculous in ancient Judea."

that it has no more reference to Christ and his mother, than it has to me and my mother. The story is simply this:

The king of Syria and the king of Israel (I have already mentioned that the Jews were split into two nations, one of which was called Judah, the capital of which was Jerusalem and the other Israel) made war jointly against Ahaz, king of Judah, and marched their armies toward Jerusalem. Ahaz and his people became alarmed, and account says, verse 2, "*Their hearts were moved as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind.*"

In this situation of things, Isaiah addresses himself to Ahaz, and assures him in the *name of the Lord* (the cant phrase of all the prophets) that these two kings should not succeed against him; and to satisfy Ahaz that this should be the case, tells him to ask a sign. This, the account says, Ahaz declined doing; giving as a reason that he would not tempt the Lord; upon which Isaiah, who is the speaker, says, ver. 44, "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign: *behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son,*" and the 16th verse says, "*And before this child shall know to refuse the evil and chuse the good,* the land which thou abhorrest or dreadest (meaning Syria and the kingdom of Israel) shall be forsaken of both her kings." Here then was the sign, and the time limited for the completion of the assurance or promise; namely, before this child should know to refuse the evil and chuse the good.

Isaiah having committed himself thus far,

it became necessary to him, in order to avoid the imputation of being a false prophet, and the consequence thereof, to take measures to make this sign appear. It certainly was not a difficult thing, in any time of the world, to find a girl with child, or to make her so; and perhaps Isaiah knew of one beforehand; for I do not suppose the prophets of that day were any more to be trusted than the priests of this, be that, however, as it may, he says in the next chapter, ver. 2, "And I took unto me faithful witness to record, Uriah the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah, and I *went unto the prophetess, and she conceived and bare a son.*"

Here then is the whole story, foolish as it is, of this child, and this virgin; and it is upon the barefaced perversion of this story, that the book of Matthew, and the impudence and sordid interests of priests in later times, have founded a theory which they call the gospel; and have applied this story to signify the person they call Jesus Christ, begotten, they say, by a ghost, whom they call holy, on the body of a woman, engaged in marriage, and afterwards married, whom they call a virgin, 700 years after this foolish story was told; a theory which, speaking for myself, I hesitate not to believe, and to say, is as fabulous and false as God is true.

But to show the imposition and falsehood of Isaiah, we have only to attend to the sequel of this story; which, though it is passed over in silence in the book of Isaiah, is related in the 28th chapter of the second Chronicles;

and which is, that instead of these two kings failing in their attempt against Ahaz, king of Judah, as Isaiah had pretended to foretell in the name of the Lord, they succeeded; Ahaz was defeated and destroyed; a hundred and twenty thousand of his people were slaughtered; Jerusalem was plundered, and two hundred thousand women, and sons and daughters, carried into captivity. Thus much for this lying prophet and imposter Isaiah, and the book of falsehoods that bears his name.

I pass on to the book of Jeremiah. This prophet, as he is called, lived in the time that Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem, in the reign of Zedekiah, the last king of Judah; and the suspicion was strong against him, that he was a traitor in the interest of Nebuchadnezzar. Everything relating to Jeremiah shows him to have been a man of an equivocal character; in his metaphor of the potter and the clay, chap. xvii., he guards his prognostications in such a crafty manner, as always to leave himself a door to escape by, in case the event should be contrary to what he had predicted.

In the 7th and 8th verses of that chapter, he makes the Almighty to say, "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and destroy it: if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent me of that evil that I thought to do unto them." Here was a proviso against one side of the case: now for the other side.

Verses 9 and 10, "And what instant I shall speak concerning a nation and concerning a

kingdom, to build and to plant it, if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice: then I will repent me of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them." Here is a proviso, against the other side; and, according to his plan of prophesying, a prophet could never be wrong, however mistaken the Almighty might be. This sort of absurd subterfuge, and this manner of speaking of the Almighty, as one would speak of a man, is consistent with nothing but the stupidity of the Bible.

As to the authenticity of the book, it is only necessary to read it in order to decide positively, that, though some passage recorded therein may have been spoken by Jeremiah, he is not the author of the book. The historical parts, if they can be called by that name, are in the most confused condition; the same events are several times repeated, and that in a manner different, and sometimes in contradiction to each other; and this disorder runs even to the last chapter, where the history, upon which the greater part of the book has been employed, begins anew, and ends abruptly. The book has all the appearance of being a medley of unconnected anecdotes, respecting persons and things of that time, collected together in the same rude manner as if the various and contradictory accounts, that are to be found in a bundle of newspapers, respecting persons and things of the present day, were put together without date, order, or explanation. I will give two examples of this kind.

It appears, from the account of the 37th chapter, that the army of Nebuchadnezzar, which is called the army of the Chaldeans, had besieged Jerusalem some time; and on their hearing that the army of Pharaoh, of Egypt, was marching against them they raised the siege, and retreated for a time. It may here be proper to mention, in order to understand this confused history, that Nebuchadnezzar had besieged and taken Jerusalem, during the reign of Jehoakim, the predecessor of Zedekiah; and that it was Nebuchadnezzar who had made Zedekiah king, or rather viceroy: and that this second siege, of which the book of Jeremiah treats, was in consequence of the revolt of Zedekiah against Nebuchadnezzar. This will in some measure account for the suspicion that affixes itself to Jeremiah of being a traitor, and in the interest of Nebuchadnezzar; whom Jeremiah calls, in the 43d chap. ver. 10, the servant of God.

The 11th verse of this chapter, (the 37th), says, "And it came to pass, that, when the army of the Chaldeans was broken up from Jerusalem, for fear of Pharaoh's army, that Jeremiah went forth out of Jerusalem, to go (as this account states) into the land of Benjamin to separate himself thence in the midst of the people; and when he was in the gate of Benjamin a captain of the ward was there, whose name was Irijah; and he took Jeremiah, the prophet, saying, Thou fallest away to the Chaldeans; then Jeremiah said, It is false, I fall not away to the Chaldeans." Jeremiah being thus stopped and accused, was,

after being examined, committed to prison, on suspicion of being a traitor, where he remained, as is stated in the last verse of this chapter.

But the next chapter gives an account of the imprisonment of Jeremiah, which has no connection with this account, but ascribes his imprisonment to another circumstance, and for which we must go back to the 21st chapter. It is there stated, ver. 1, that Zedekiah sent Pashur, the son of Malchiah, and Zephaniah, the son of Maaseiah, the priest, to Jeremiah to inquire of him concerning Nebuchadnezzar, whose army was then before Jerusalem; and Jeremiah said to them, ver. 8: "Thus saith the Lord, Behold I set before you the way of life, and the way of death; he that abideth in this city shall die by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence; but he that goeth out and falleth to the Chaldeans that besiege you, he shall live, and his life shall be unto him for a prey."

This interview and conference breaks off abruptly at the end of the 10th verse of the 21st chapter; and such is the disorder of this book that we have to pass over sixteen chapters, upon various subjects, in order to come at the continuation and event of this conference, and this brings us to the first verse of the 38th chapter as I have just mentioned.

The 38th chapter opens with saying: "Then Shaptiah, the son of Mattan; Gedaliah, the son of Pashur and Jucal, the son of Shelemiah; and Pushur, the son of Malchiah, (here are more persons mentioned than in the 21st chapter), heard the words that Jeremiah spoke

unto the people, saying, *Thus saith the Lord, He that remaineth in this city shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence; but he that goeth forth to the Chaldeans shall live; for he shall have his life for a prey, and shall live;* (which are the words of the conference), therefore, (say they to Zedekiah), we beseech thee, let us put this man to death, *for thus he weakeneth the hands of the men of war that remain in this city, and the hands of all the people in speaking such words unto them; for this man seeketh not the welfare of the people, but the hurt*"; and at the 6th verse it is said: "Then they took Jeremiah, and put him into a dungeon of Malchiah."

These two accounts are different and contradictory. The one ascribes his imprisonment to his attempt to escape out of the city; the other to his preaching and prophesying in the city; the one to his being seized by the guard at the gate; the other to his being accused before Zedekiah, by the conferees.

In the next chapter (the 39th) we have another instance of the disordered state of this book; for notwithstanding, the siege of the city by Nebuchadnezzar has been the subject of several of the preceding chapters, particularly the 37th and 38th, the 39th chapter begins as if not a word had been said upon the subject, and as if the reader was to be informed of every particular respecting it, for it begins with saying, ver. 1: *"In the ninth year of Zedekiah, king of Judah, in the tenth month, came Nebuchadnezzar, king of Baby-*

lon, and all his army against Jerusalem, and besieged it," etc., etc.

It is not possible that any one man, and more particularly Jeremiah, could have been the writer of this book. The errors are such as could not have been committed by any person sitting down to compose a work. Were I, or any other man, to write in such a disordered manner, nobody would read what was written; and everybody would suppose that the writer was in a state of insanity. The only way, therefore, to account for this disorder, is, that the book is a medley of detached unauthenticated anecdotes, put together by some stupid book-maker, under the name of Jeremiah; because many of them refer to him, and to the circumstances of the times he lived in.

THE NEW TESTAMENT

The New Testament, they tell us, is founded upon the prophesies of the Old; if so, it must follow the fate of its foundation.

As it is nothing extraordinary that a woman should be with child before she is married, and that the son she might bring forth should be executed, even unjustly, I see no reason for not believing that such a woman as Mary, and such a man as Joseph, and Jesus, existed; their mere existence is a matter of indifference about which there is no ground either to believe or to disbelieve, and which comes under the common head of *It may be so; and what then?* The probability, however, is that there were such persons, or at least such as resembled them in part of

the circumstances, because almost all romantic stories have been suggested by some actual circumstance; as the adventures of Robinson Crusoe, not a word of which is true, were suggested by the case of Alexander Selkirk.

It is not the existence, or non-existence, of the persons that I trouble myself about; it is the fable of Jesus Christ, as told in the New Testament, and the wild and visionary doctrine raised thereon, against which I contend. The story, taking it as it is told, is blasphemously obscene. It gives an account of a young woman engaged to be married, and, while under this engagement, she is, to speak plain language, debauched by a ghost, under the impious pretense (Luke, chap. i., ver. 35) that "the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee." Notwithstanding which Joseph afterwards marries her, cohabits with her as his wife, and in his turn rivals the ghost. This is putting the story into intelligible language, and, when told in this manner, there is not a priest but must be ashamed to own it.

(Mary, the supposed virgin mother of Jesus, had several other children, sons and daughters. See Matt., chap. xiii., 55, 56.)

Obscenity in matters of faith, however, wrapped up, is always a token of fable and imposture; for it is necessary to our serious belief in God, that we do not connect it with stories that run, as this does, into ludicrous interpretations. This story is, upon the face of it, the same kind of story as that of Jupiter and Leda, or Jupiter and Europa, or any of

the amorous adventures of Jupiter; and shows, as is already stated in the former part of the *Age of Reason*, that the Christian faith is built upon the heathen mythology.

As the historical parts of the New Testament, so far as concerns Jesus Christ, are confined to a very short space of time, less than two years, and all within the same country, and nearly in the same spot, the discordance of time, place and circumstance, which detects the fallacy of the books of the Old Testament, and proves them to be impositions, cannot be expected to be found here in the same abundance. The New Testament compared with the Old, is like a farce of one act, in which there is not room for very numerous violations of the unities. There are, however, some glaring conditions, which, exclusive of the fallacy of the pretended prophesies, are sufficient to show the story of Jesus Christ to be false.

I lay it down as a position which cannot be controverted, first, that the *agreement* of all the parts of a story does not prove that story to be true, because the parts may agree, and the whole may be false; secondly, that the *disagreement of the parts of a story proves the whole cannot be true.* The agreement does not prove truth, but the disagreement proves falsehood positively.

The history of Jesus Christ is contained in the four books ascribed to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The first chapter of Matthew begins with giving a genealogy of Jesus Christ,

and in the third chapter of Luke there is given a genealogy of Jesus Christ. Did these two agree, it would not prove the genealogy to be true, because it might, nevertheless, be a fabrication; but as they contradict each other in every particular, it proves falsehood absolutely. If Matthew speaks truth, Luke speaks falsehood; and as there is no authority for believing one more than the other, there is no authority for believing either; and if they cannot be believed even in the very first thing they say, and set out to prove, they are not entitled to be believed in anything they say afterwards. Truth is an uniform thing; and as to inspiration and revelation were we to admit it, it is impossible to suppose it can be contradictory. Either, then, the men called apostles are imposters, or the books ascribed to them have been written by other persons, and fathered upon them, as is the case with the Old Testament.

The book of Matthew gives, chap. i., ver. 6, a genealogy by name from David, up through Joseph, the husband of Mary, to Christ; and makes there to be *twenty-eight* generations. The book of Luke gives also a genealogy by name from Christ, through Joseph, the husband of Mary, down to David, and makes there to be *forty-three* generations; besides which, there are only the two names of David and Joseph that are alike in the two lists.

The story of the angel announcing what the church calls the *immaculate conception* is not so much as mentioned in the books ascribed to Mark and John, and is differently related

in Matthew and Luke. The former says the angel appeared to Joseph; the latter says it was to Mary; but either, Joseph or Mary, was the worst evidence that could have been thought of; for it was others that should have testified *for them*, and not they for themselves. Were any girl that is now with child to say, and even to swear it, that she was gotten with child by a ghost, and that an angel told her so, would she be believed? Certainly she would not. Why then are we to believe the same thing of another girl whom we never saw, told by nobody knows who, nor when, nor where? How strange and inconsistent is it, that the same circumstances that would weaken the belief even of a probable story, should be given as a motive for believing this one, that has upon the face of it every token of absolute impossibility and imposture?

The story of Herod destroying all the children under two years old, belongs altogether to the book of Matthew; not one of the rest mentions anything about it. Had such a circumstance been true, the universality of it must have made it known to all the writers; and the thing would have been too striking to have been omitted by any. The writer tells us, that Jesus escaped this slaughter, because Joseph and Mary were warned by an angel to flee with him into Egypt; but he forgot to make any provision for John who was then under two years of age. John, however, who staid behind, fared as well as Jesus, who fled; and, therefore, the story circumstantially belies itself.

THE ACCOUNT OF THE CRUCIFIXION

The book ascribed to Matthew says, "There was darkness over all the land from the sixth hour unto the ninth hour—that the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom—that there was an earthquake—that the rocks rent—that the graves opened, that the bodies of many of the saints that slept arose and came out of their graves after the resurrection, and went into the holy city and appeared unto many." Such is the account this dashing writer of the book of Matthew gives, but in which he is not supported by the writers of the other books.

The writer of the book ascribed to Mark, in detailing the circumstances of the crucifixion, makes no mention of any earthquake, nor of the rocks rending, nor of the graves opening, nor of the dead men walking out. The writer of the book of Luke is silent also upon the same points. And as to the writer of the book of John, though he details all the circumstances of the crucifixion down to the burial of Christ, he says nothing about either the darkness—the veil of the temple—the earthquake—the rocks —the graves nor the dead men.

It is an easy thing to tell a lie, but it is difficult to support the lie after it is told. The writer of the book of Matthew should have told us who the saints were that came to life again, and went into the city, and what became of them afterwards, and who it was that

saw them; for he is not hardy enough to say that he saw them himself; whether they came out naked and all in natural buff, he-saints and she-saints; or whether they came full dressed, and where they got their dresses; whether they went to their former habitations, and reclaimed their wives, their husbands, and their property, and how they were received; whether they entered ejectments for the recovery of their possessions, or brought actions of *crim. con.* against the rival interlopers; whether they remained on earth, and followed their former occupation of preaching or working; or whether they died again, or went back to their graves alive, and buried themselves.

Strange, indeed, that an army of saints should return to life and nobody know who they were, nor who it was that saw them, and that not a word more should be said upon the subject, nor these saints have anything to tell us! Had it been the prophets who (as we are told) had formerly prophesied of these things, *they* must have had a *great deal* to say. They could have told us everything, and we should have had posthumous prophesies, with notes and commentaries upon the first, a little better, at least, than we have now. Had it been Moses, and Aaron, and Joshua, and Samuel and David, not an unconverted Jew had remained in all Jerusalem. Had it been John the Baptist, and the saints of the time then present, everybody would have known them, and they would have out-preached and out-famed all the other apostles. But, instead of this, these saints are made to pop up, like

Jonah's gourd in the night, for no purpose at all but to wither in the morning.

STORY OF THE RESURRECTION

The writer of the book of Matthew relates that the angel that was sitting on the stone at the mouth of the sepulchre said to the two Marys, chap. xxviii., ver. 7: "Behold, Christ is gone before you into Galilee, there ye shall see him; lo, I have told you." And the same writer at the next two verses, (8, 9,) makes Christ himself to speak to the same purpose to these women immediately after the angel had told it to them, and that they ran quickly to tell it to the disciples; and at the 16th verse it is said, "Then the eleven disciples went away to Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them; and when they saw him, they worshiped him."

But the writer of the book of John tells us a story very different to this; for he says, chap. xx., ver. 19. "Then the same day, at evening, being the first day of the week, (that is, the same day that Christ is said to have risen,) when the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst of them."

According to Matthew, the eleven were marching to Galilee, to meet Jesus in a mountain, by his own appointment, at the very time when, according to John, they were assembled in another place, and that not by appointment, but in secret, for fear of the Jews.

The writer of the book of Luke contradicts that of Matthew more pointedly than John does; for he says expressly that the meeting was in *Jerusalem*, the evening of the same day that he (Christ) rose, and that the *eleven* were *there*. See Luke, chap. xxiv. ver. 13, 33.

Now, it is not possible, unless we admit these supposed disciples the right of willful lying, that the writer of these books could be any of the eleven persons called disciples; for if, according to Matthew, the eleven went into Galilee to meet Jesus in a mountain by his own appointment, on the same day that he is said to have risen, Luke and John must have been two of that eleven; yet the writer of Luke says expressly, and John implies as much, that the meeting was that same day, in a house in Jerusalem; and, on the other hand, if according to Luke and John, the *eleven* were assembled in a house in Jerusalem, Matthew must have been one of that eleven; yet Matthew says the meeting was in a mountain in Galilee, and consequently the evidence given in those books destroys each other.

The writer of the book of Mark says nothing about any meeting in Galilee; but he says, chap. xvi. ver. 12; that Christ, after his resurrection, appeared in another form to two of them, as they walked into the country, and that these two told it to the residue, who would not believe them. Luke also tells a story, in which he keeps Christ employed the whole of the day of this pretended resurrection, until the evening, and which totally invalidates the

account of going to the mountain in Galilee. He says, that two of them, without saying which two, went that same day to a village called Emmaus, threescore furlongs (seven miles and a half) from Jerusalem, and that Christ, in disguise, went with them, and stayed with them unto the evening, and supped with them, and then vanished out of their sight, and re-appeared that same evening at the meeting of the eleven in Jerusalem.

This is the contradictory manner in which the evidence of this pretended re-appearance of Christ is stated; the only point in which the writers agree, is the skulking privacy of that re-appearance; for whether it was in the recess of a mountain in Galilee, or in a shut-up house in Jerusalem, it was still skulking. To what cause then are we to assign this skulking? On the one hand, it is directly repugnant to the supposed or pretended end—that of convincing the world that Christ was risen; and, on the other hand, to have asserted the publicity of it, would have exposed the writers of those books to the public detection, and, therefore, they have been under the necessity of making it a private affair.

As to the account of Christ being seen by more than five hundred at once, it is Paul only who says it, and not the five hundred who say it for themselves. It is, therefore, the testimony of but one man, and that too of a man, who did not, according to the same account, believe a word of the matter himself, at the time it is said to have happened. His evidence

supposing him to have been the writer of the 15th chapter of Corinthians, where this account is given, is like that of a man who comes into a court of justice to swear, that what he had sworn before is false. A man may often see reason, and he has, too, always the right of changing his opinion; but this liberty does not extend to matters of fact.

SCIENCE AND REVEALED RELIGION

The most detestable wickedness, the most horrid cruelties, and the greatest miseries, that have afflicted the human race, have had their origin in this thing called revelation, or revealed religion. It has been the most dishonorable belief against the character of the Divinity, the most destructive to morality, and the peace and happiness of man, that ever was propagated since man began to exist. It is better, far better, that we admitted, if it were possible, a thousand devils to roam at large, and preach publicly the doctrine of devils, if there were any such, than that we permitted one such imposter and monster as Moses, Joshua, Samuel, and the Bible prophets, to come with the pretended word of God in his mouth, and have credit among us.

Whence arose all the horrid assassinations of whole nations of men, women and infants, with which the Bible is filled; and the bloody persecutions, and tortures unto death, and religious wars, that since that time have laid Europe in blood and ashes; whence arose they,

but from this impious thing called revealed religion, and this monstrous belief, that God has spoken to man? The lies of the Bible have been the cause of the one, and the lies of the Testament of the other.

It has been by wandering from the immutable laws of science, and the right use of reason, and setting up an invented thing called revealed religion, that so many wild and blasphemous conceits have been formed of the Almighty. The Jews have made him the assassin of the human species, to make room for the religion of the Jews. The Christians have made him the murderer of himself, and the founder of a new religion, to supersede and expel the Jewish religion. And to find pretense and admission for these things, they must have supposed his power and his wisdom imperfect, or his will changeable; and the changeableness of the will is the imperfection of the judgment. The philosopher knows that the laws of the Creator have never changed with respect either to the principles of science, or the properties of matter. Why, then, is it supposed they have changed with respect to man?

I here close the subject. I have shown in all the foregoing parts of this work that the Bible and Testament are impositions and forgeries, and I leave the evidence I have produced in proof of it to be refuted, if anyone can do it; and I leave the ideas that are suggested in the conclusion of the work to rest on the

mind of the reader; certain as I am, that when opinions are free, either in matters of government or religion, truth will finally and powerfully prevail.

E. HALDEMAN-JULIUS
Editor
LITTLE BLUE BOOKS